

WeClim Equally

Gender-smart handbook for climate programmes



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“Our vision of a prosperous, inclusive and climate-resilient society means pursuing equal opportunities for all. We need everyone engaged if we are to achieve the transformations we need to halt climate change and regenerate our planet. In a world of diverse needs and perspectives, so essential to innovation, women bring distinctive leadership qualities, social change capabilities and entrepreneurial skills that are essential of our remaking of ourselves.

EIT Climate-KIC is committed to gender equality and is uniquely positioned to place female entrepreneurship and female leadership at the centre of climate action.”

Kirsten Dunlop, CEO of EIT Climate-KIC

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This handbook is completed by:

Name:

Location:

Organisation:

Date:

Function within organisation:

Glossary

HIGHLIGHTING DEFINITIONS RELEVANT TO READING THIS DOCUMENT

Gender equality terminology in this handbook is based on the definitions in the Gender Equality Lexicon (Quiroga & McCleary-Sills, 2018). Find some of these definitions below, and please consult the Lexicon for more definitions and detail.

Gender

The socially and culturally constructed ideas of what it is to be a man or woman in a specific context. We note that gender is a spectrum and it is important to take into consideration those who do not feel represented by the gender binary.

Gender gap

The disparity between women and men, or boys and girls, conditions or positions in society based on gendered norms and expectations.

Gender lens

A perspective that pays particular attention to how gender differences and relations are relevant for investments and projects.

Gender mainstreaming

The process of integrating a gender lens into all aspects of an organisation's strategies and initiatives, as well as its culture, systems and operations.

Gender bias

Prejudiced actions or thoughts that affect a person or a group of people based on their perceived gender.

Additionally, some handbook-relevant definitions in the gender-climate field are explained below.

Climate-resilient society

A society that has the ability to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to hazardous events, trends, or disturbances related to climate. Improving climate resilience involves assessing how climate change will create new, or alter current, climate-related risks, and taking steps to better cope with these risks.

Climate-focused business

Businesses that take action to catalyse a positive impact on climate change through an offering of products, product-service systems and services.

Eco gender gap

The difference in environmentally friendly behaviour between genders. Men are less likely to pursue environmentally-friendly behaviours than women. This could be due to men feeling that caring for the environment somehow undermines their masculinity.

Gender-smart climate start-up support

The integration of a gender lens alongside a climate impact assessment into a new or existing climate programme for better business and environmental outcomes.

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Introduction

A BRIEF BREAKDOWN OF THE HANDBOOK

The WeClim Equally gender-smart handbook for climate programmes offers guidance to climate incubators, accelerators, etc. to integrate a gender perspective into their programmes.

This handbook provides you with the tools to implement a gender perspective in your climate accelerator programme, and it is meant for all accelerator delivery teams that have an interest in integrating a gender-specific approach.

This handbook comprises of three key parts, whereby the first section concerns **goal setting**. It makes the case for a gender-climate lens in accelerator programmes and considers the entrepreneurs and innovations that you should target in your accelerator programme. After having worked on two exercises, you will have set the goals for your accelerator's gender-climate focus.

In the second part of the handbook, you will assess your gender-climate activities in the following **four steps**:

1. **Gender smart programme design.**
2. **Gender smart outreach and communications.**
3. **Gender smart selection, training and investing.**
4. **Internal reflection.**

In the third part of the handbook, building on your goals you have set, and having undergone the four steps, you will decide which gender-climate interventions and changes you will commit to and integrate in your programme, as well as how you can measure the impact of those interventions. You will do this in your **work plan**.



I. Goal setting

A case for climate and gender

MAKING THE CASE FOR A GENDER-CLIMATE LENS IN ACCELERATOR PROGRAMMES

We aim to trigger a positive systematic change in gender across the climate innovation sector.

Why EIT Climate-KIC?

As Europe's leading climate innovation initiative, EIT Climate-KIC aims to provide equal opportunities for all genders throughout its programmes with the ultimate goal of triggering a systematic change on gender across the climate innovation sector. To ensure this transformation, a climate and gender-smart approach has been specifically developed for start-up support programmes. EIT Climate-KIC's education, entrepreneurship and research and innovation programmes help people to develop the skills, competences and capacities to lead a business or section of society through transition.

EIT Climate-KIC's mission is to achieve systems transformation through innovation, and inclusion and diversity are key to ensuring transformational change. In practice, this includes applying gender balance when working with course participants, panels or reviewers as well as applying participatory, inclusive practices in our work, e.g. in workshops or trainings.

For our community of partners, innovators and entrepreneurs involved in our entrepreneurship work, we want to enable partners to better attract and support women-led innovations and initiatives through the full lifecycle of development and acceleration. Moreover, we want to provide tools and knowledge for innovators and entrepreneurs to incorporate positive gender outcomes into their business model design, teams and products and services. All of this is necessary because there are a number of challenges that need to be addressed, at the intersection of climate and gender.

Gender-climate challenges



Men dominated

Innovation development for climate action is a men dominated field and the female perspective is sorely lacking. (Rafi, 2021)



The business climate

Women entrepreneurs face many challenges when it comes to starting their businesses which leads to a limited women workforce.



Approach

Programmes are often willing to integrate a focus on women, but find it difficult to turn this theoretical topic into practical development and implementation of a consistent gender approach.



Diversity and representation

Programmes are lacking gender-diversity and this underrepresentation affects the diversity of the applicant pool and target customers who the entrepreneurs aim to service with their innovations.

Why should accelerators care about climate and gender?



1. Women are powerful agents of change

The number of climate innovations developed by women entrepreneurs is growing, reflecting a strong opportunity to tap into the experience, knowledge and expertise of women who can contribute to tackling this crisis together with us and who have been under-engaged and under-served in many ways. Women face the impacts of climate change like droughts, floods and loss of crops more directly and they are the ones adapting to these impacts (Van Leeuwen, 2021). Therefore they are often in a better position to recognise some of the opportunities that climate change presents. Additionally, women entrepreneurs are not only more likely to innovate to address social needs, and also score higher in key skills such as leadership, problem-solving and innovation (Aguilar, et al, 2015).



3. Have more successful entrepreneurs and start-ups in your programme

Leveraging knowledge and skills from different expertise areas, genders, and social skills, within organisations leads to robust and more widely appropriate and accepted solutions and innovations. A more diverse start-up is more robust, and has more diverse ideas and perspectives, which most likely leads to a more resilient business (Dixon-Fyle, et al, 2020).



2. Ensure more diversity in climate innovations throughout the programme

By creating a more gender-inclusive programme, you are able to attract more diverse entrepreneurs, and innovations, as well as providing better support to all of those different entrepreneurs through having more diversity expertise, knowledge and skills in your team. This inclusivity is likely to lead to a more diverse innovation and entrepreneur portfolio of your acceleration programme. If accelerators can codify parameters around diversity, then it will improve their ability to create diverse, fundable, clean start-ups. By adding a gender lens to your climate programme, ideas can be lifted to a higher level, coming from a wider scope of innovation types, and helping to reach a wider range of customers.



4. Support in the fight against inequality

Fight inequality, and with it poverty and climate change (World Bank Group, 2016). EIT Climate-KIC sees social activation as a key lever of change for climate action and social activation and experimentation is at the heart of our programmatic work.



Exercise

Create statements and set objectives

To ensure that you use the content shared in this handbook in a way that fits with your programme, it is important that you first identify your aim in terms of gender equality, diversity and general inclusion. Gender mainstreaming can be a very abstract topic. Through the coming exercises within this handbook, we will guide you to formulate a concrete aim.



DEFINE YOUR GENDER-CLIMATE STATEMENT

Let's start by developing gender-climate statements for your programme or organisation by filling out the white text fields below.

Vision statement

First set the long-term gender-climate vision statement, and ensure that it is inspiring for you and your team. A vision statement describes the long-term objective for your company, usually for a timeframe of 10 years and beyond.

Mission statement

Next, define your gender-climate mission, whereby you should ensure that the statement is actionable and realistic to things that your programme will be able to work on and achieve. A mission statement is like a roadmap of how to achieve the goals set in your vision statement. It defines the purpose of the organisation.

Vision statement

For example: EIT Climate-KIC's vision is a prosperous, inclusive, climate-resilient society founded on a circular, zero-carbon economy by 2050.

Name of programme:

Name of Organ:

We envision a world where:

Mission statement

For example: EIT Climate-KIC's mission is to achieve systems transformation through innovation, inclusion and diversity. We strive to achieve gender mainstreaming within all of our programmes.

Our mission is to:



DEFINE YOUR OBJECTIVES

Having created a vision and mission statement, it is useful to more clearly define who you will target in your accelerator programme. Following the characteristics of entrepreneurs or innovations, you will need to explain the current situation and then define what your objective for change is. While completing this exercise, keep in mind your responses to the previous exercise.

Define your current situation

For each of the five criteria in the below table, define your current situation. See if you have any data that matches the example indicators.

Define your objectives

Now, look back at your vision and mission statements. Is there a change needed to achieve your vision and mission? Define your objectives to achieve these as concretely as possible.

Define your objectives

1. Start-up leadership

Your current situation

Your objectives

Percentage or number of.. different types of founder teams of the start-ups, for instance: men-led founder teams, women-led founder teams, or mixed founder teams	Example: We currently work with a division of 55% men-led teams, 35% mix founder teams, and 10% women-led teams.	Example: We want to include more women-led founder teams and aim to have 20% women-led teams.
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2. Customer focus

Percentage or number of.. different types of consumers targeted by the start-ups, for instance: men-targeted innovations, women-targeted innovations or gender-blind innovations.	Example: 30% of the innovations we currently work with specifically target women, 50% men and 20% are gender blind.	Example: We aim to include more women-targeted innovations, and want to increase the percentage to 40%.
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3. Area of focus

Percentage or number of.. different types of sectors/areas, for instance: urban transitions, sustainable land use, sustainable production systems, decision metrics, finance, etc	Example: Last year, about 80% of the innovations with which worked are from the sustainable energy sector.	Example: We aim to have more variety in the innovations that apply.
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4. Innovation types

Percentage or number of.. different types of innovation, for instance: offering innovations, experience innovations, configuration innovations.	Example: 70% of the innovations that apply to our programme are focused on technical product innovations (offering innovations).	Example: We would like to focus on diversifying our applications to include more community model innovations.
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5. Other criteria

Percentage or number of.. different entrepreneurs/businesses/innovations in your programme, for instance: their geographical location, business stage, age, etc.	Example: 90% of the participants joining our training, are in the age range of 25-45 years old.	Example: We want to support young innovators (18-24) and increase their participation in the training to 20%.
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CREATE YOUR PERSONA

Personas are semi-fictional characters based on your current (or ideal) target group. Personas can be developed by reviewing the information that you have about your target group, and updating it with research, to improve your connection with your entrepreneurs, innovators, and customers.

Based on the objectives that you defined for your programme, it is useful to create a persona of the type of entrepreneur who you would like to attract more of to your accelerator programme. Look back at your objectives for change on the previous page, and then define below who you should more actively engage across all of your work.

Note: You can certainly create multiple personas, but do keep in mind that a specific work plan per persona is needed.

Persona

Name:		Gender:
Age:	Location:	
Sector:		
Business model:		
Business size:		
Aspirations:		
Three reasons to apply to your accelerator programme:		
Three barriers to apply to your accelerator programme:		
Best timing to reach out to them:		
Possible channels to engage with them:		



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II. Four steps

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About the steps

A BRIEF BREAKDOWN OF THE FOUR STEPS

The four steps in this handbook help you to decide which gender-climate interventions and changes you will integrate in your programme.



1. Gender smart programme design

You probably already have an amazing team in place, but is it set up strategically to build an inclusive programme? You need to ensure that your delivery team is diverse in its expertise, skills and gender to ensure that your programme welcomes a wide scope of innovations for climate action. Building this inclusivity starts at the top but triggers inclusivity in all parts of the programme, including coaches and applicants.



3. Gender smart selection, training and investing

Different entrepreneurs have different needs when it comes to the support that they are seeking. When setting up your programme offering, ensure that the support your team offers fits the needs of the different entrepreneurs so that they can bring their innovations for climate action to the highest level to thrive in your programme and beyond.



2. Gender smart outreach and communications

When reaching out and promoting your programme to entrepreneurs, it is important to decide on your purpose and then develop your outreach strategy accordingly. Do you choose to target a specific group of people, or do you want to reach a wider group of people equally? To ensure equality, sometimes an equity approach is needed, where you highlight an under-valued target group.



4. Internal reflection to eliminate bias

Through pitching and competition, participants are selected to continue in a programme, receive additional training and eventually be funded. The programme has a major responsibility when it comes to designing its selection processes and other support advancement such as financing and participation in future programmes. Some activities bias certain participants who have high quality and potential. It is essential to eliminate these biases within the selection process.

How to use

HOW TO USE THE FOUR STEPS IN THIS HANDBOOK

In each of the steps, you will work from self-assessment to an action plan based on our suggestions for potential interventions.

You should have now completed the first part of the handbook on goal setting. The second part of this handbook presents four steps to support you in including your gender and climate focus in accelerator programmes. To get the most out of the tool, make sure you read this closely. Each step is divided into four main parts.



The case

This first part explains why this segment is relevant for EIT Climate-KIC, your climate programme and the entrepreneurs in your programme.



Self-assessment

The second part is a list of questions that you need to answer with “Yes” or “No”. This will help to assess what you currently do, as well as showing the areas where you could improve.



Potential interventions

This part shows a number of interventions that you could apply to your current work process to improve your focus on both gender and climate. We have provided interventions that are easy to implement with little effort, and others that ask for higher commitment from your team and more resources. Please evaluate what would work for you.



Action plan

Next there is a page on which you can ideate on what you would like to improve in your process, define your impact goal and outcomes for this step. Finally, you will reflect on which activities could help you to achieve this impact.

At the very end of the handbook, you will find the **work plan**. This is where we will summarise the plan for the coming programme and detail your impact metrics.



Step 1 Gender Smart Programme Design

Let's reflect on your own team and identify interventions that help you to create a climate and gender-smart expert team to roll out this programme. Ensure that your team is diverse in its expertise, skills and gender to ensure that your programme includes a wide scope of innovations for climate action.

STEP 1

Building and growing your team towards diversity



THE CASE

Having all genders represented throughout your organisation, project team, and pool of coaches makes business sense. It increases effectiveness in monitoring staff performance, and reduces gender discrimination throughout the management ranks, which helps to recruit, promote, and retain talent. Hiring women improves the likelihood that a company will better understand women consumers by 144% (Hewlett, et al., 2013) and hiring people from various backgrounds will widen your opportunities to support innovations from different categories. Increased diversity within your own organisation helps you to better serve the needs of a more diverse range of entrepreneurs in your accelerator programme, and it will increase the quality of innovations after they are supported.



SELF-ASSESSMENT

Yes No

My accelerator programme has written and publicly communicated a clear vision and mission statement about gender equality, diversity and general inclusion.

Looking back at the statements that you made in the first part of this handbook. Would you be able to share this externally if you have not already?

Are all genders equally represented in your project team and coaching pool?

A diverse gender representation in your team helps to have a more diverse representation in the entire programme. For example, having more women within your project team will improve the likelihood that you will understand women entrepreneurs and the women customers who are targeted by the start-up innovations.

Within your project team and coaching pool, do you have people who match (part of) the description of your targeted entrepreneur?

Look back at your persona, and reflect on whether your staff have overlap in terms of their sector, business model, location, age, gender, and type of innovation. Ensure variety and diversity in your project team and coaching pool when aiming to support various types of innovations and entrepreneurs.

Do your coaches have experience in soft skills that are valuable in the role of coaching?

Think about skills such as confidence building, public speaking, negotiation and psychological support.

Do you provide your team members and coaches training on recognising and addressing gender bias in the workplace and the entrepreneurship ecosystem?

Provide your team with the right tools to recognise gender bias that occurs in the workspace, and support them to act on it in an assertive way.

Do you have a policy to ensure equal opportunities for all of your (future) employees?

Parents - particularly mothers - face disadvantages in terms of building their career. Providing childcare, ensuring equal pay, and offering flexible working hours can help parents ensure continuity in their careers.



POTENTIAL INTERVENTIONS

Review these potential interventions to improve the outcome of your self-assessment.

INTERVENTION A

Map out your team, evaluate and set your goals.

To start, it would be useful to reflect on your current team. In the first part of this handbook, you have already briefly considered this by reviewing the percentage or number of men and women in certain roles within your team. Try to provide as much detail as possible. You could extend this by mapping out who works within different layers in your organisation. Next, reflect on the project team that you are working with, and check what their roles, gender, and expertise are. Do this similarly for your pool of coaches. For the employee map within your organisation, the project team and the pool of coaches, make sure that you highlight the ratio in terms of gender, expertise area and level of experience.

Once you have updated the overview with more detail, evaluate what has been completed. Check for variety of genders and expertise areas in different sections of your team. Based on this reflection, set your goals for each section. For example, define what the ratio is that you would want to achieve between men and women in certain aspects of your organisation, or between technical and social educational background.



Resource

Check the [UN Women Toolkit for Accelerators](#) to see how you can do this in detail for the gender component.

INTERVENTION B

Develop and follow a policy to provide equal opportunities for all (future) employees.

This policy should indicate your perspective in terms of childcare, equal pay, parental leave, a reporting mechanism, and flexible working hours. This can help parents - particularly mothers - to ensure continuity in their careers. For example, if they are compelled to resign due to a lack of affordable, quality childcare and do not work at all for a long period, they tend to have difficulty re-entering the workforce at the same level as before they left.



Resource

Check the [Gender Equality Strategy Guide](#) by the Australian Government as an example.

INTERVENTION C

Create awareness around gender bias in your team.

If you realise that your team is not aware of gender biases and not very interested in thinking about this aspect of the acceleration work, then try to organise a gender bias awareness session. Increased internal awareness will help to reflect on the level of inclusivity in the organisation, coming from all layers of the team.



Resource

Visit this [webpage](#) for an example, or review this [training slidedeck](#) that was shared in a gender bias awareness session with coaches of the ClimateLaunchpad programme.

INTERVENTION D

Eliminate bias from your recruitment system.

Without the right recruitment system, multiple biases can play an important, but unconscious role in who you hire. For example, discrimination against qualified people can result from affinity bias, namely the tendency of people to connect with others who share similar interests, experiences and backgrounds. This can lead to companies hiring people based on the 'company culture' fit.



Resource

Visit this [webpage](#) from Frontier Incubators to see how you can eliminate (gender) bias from your recruitment process and allow all genders equal opportunities in the selection and progression processes.

EXAMPLE

An accelerator programme in Colombia

From the start, the accelerator team in Colombia comprised of two men, who have mainly hired women. At present, their coaching pool includes three men and two women, and their organisation now comprises 60% women. Due to this strong interest in hiring women to their team, they have seen a growing interest among women entrepreneurs to participate in their programme and work on innovations for climate action.



ACTION PLAN

Look back at your self-assessment. For all of the questions that you have answered with a “No”, try to ideate how you could turn them into a “Yes”. Write your ideas down below.

Example: In our team, only one person has ever participated in a training on gender. We aim to hire an external party to train the entire delivery team into recognising and addressing gender bias in the workplace and in the entrepreneurship ecosystem, based on intervention C.

Now that you have an idea about all of the things you can do, reflect back on your mission and vision statement, and define what the **impact** is that you want to achieve within this step. What specific impact do you aim to create and to whom do you want to deliver it? Try to be as specific and measurable as possible.

Example: In the coming two years, we want to have a fully gender inclusive team.

Now that you know what impact you aim for, define your **outcomes**. List the most important things that need to happen to realise the impact, but that you might not be fully able to control as an organisation.

Example: All team members recognise and act on gender bias in the workspace.

Finally, reflect on your ideation and highlight the **activities (outcomes)** that will help you to achieve your impact. 



Step 2 Gender smart outreach and communications

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Ensure that all entrepreneurs have equal opportunity to apply for your entrepreneur support programme, and that people of different genders, expertise areas and skill sets are motivated to participate.

STEP 2

Promoting your programme to the right entrepreneurs



THE CASE

Climate innovations have a wide range of scope, from activating communities to collecting waste, creating green partnerships between organisations, to technical innovations that develop biodiesel from the grease in industrial wastewater. We need to ensure outreach to entrepreneurs of various genders and types of expertise, to ensure that the best innovations find their way to the surface, in all these various sectors.



SELF-ASSESSMENT

Yes No

Have you performed a brief insights study to understand the aspirations of your persona and the barriers they might experience in participating in your accelerator programme?

You need to know who you are working with to target them in an effective way. Make sure that your outreach touches upon the aspirations of your persona and that it solves (some) of the barriers that they might be facing.

Are your outreach channels used by your persona?

Are the channels safe to use and accessible? Your outreach channels are crucial to address your target group very directly. For example, think of challenges that they might face with phone access, internet access or attending meetings late at night.

Do your communication materials portray entrepreneurs to whom your persona can relate?

Social norms induce women entrepreneurs to choose socially acceptable sectors and can affect their perceptions about what they are capable of achieving as a woman. Providing examples across genders can make this innovation for the climate action sector more mainstream, as well as helping women to feel more comfortable to apply.

Do your communication materials portray the innovations and business models that you would like to include more in your programme?

People will make associations with what your programme is about based on the examples that you show. If you only show one example about an entrepreneur who developed a technical innovation on energy supply, that is what people will associate the programme with. In order to show the various directions in which ideas can proceed, it is useful to show a variety of examples.

Do your communication materials avoid showing gender stereotypes, meaning that both men and women are presented in a diversity of roles and across innovations?

Women can do jobs traditionally associated with men, just as men can do jobs traditionally associated with women. The division of labour between women and men does not correspond to their innate capacities or preferences. In all of your communication materials, you are able to support gender stereotypes, or stand up against them.

In your communication materials, have you explicitly promoted the elements of your accelerator programme that appeal to your persona?

Think about what kind of content, types of coaches, topics, meeting times and format appeal to your persona. Every person values things differently and finds different aspects more important.

Does your selection process make it likely for your persona to be selected?

Your selection criteria may bias certain people in the application process and seeing these criteria might even deter people from applying to your programme in the first place. Think of timelines, the timing of the application, type of presentation activity and (online) medium, etc.



POTENTIAL INTERVENTIONS

Review these potential interventions to improve the outcome of your self-assessment.

INTERVENTION E

Set a goal for your outreach materials.

Before you start your outreach, you need to know what you aim to achieve. We have already developed our target through the persona exercise. You could have multiple personas that you want to focus on in your outreach, or it might be that you want to just emphasise one.

If you have various personas, think of what the divide is between them that you would want to aim for. Do you want to have an equal split between your personas in terms of highlighting them in outreach? For example, do you aim for a 50-50 divide in terms of gender, or a 33-33-33 divide in terms of innovation type? Alternatively, would you rather achieve a more equal participation, and are you willing to focus on one or two personas that have been underrepresented in the past application pools?



Resource

You can complete this in the work plan on page 39.

INTERVENTION F

Conduct research about your target group.

Are you having difficulties answering some questions in the persona and do you realise that you that you actually do not know your entrepreneurs too well? Then it is important to gather this information before you start your work. Therefore, conduct research about the target audience that you want to reach within this programme. This could be done in a light-touch way where you speak to other colleagues, friends and/or family members who might understand this persona better. Alternatively, you could take some more time and actually conduct a survey or interviews with the people you try to engage in your programme. In this way, you can learn about their beliefs, aspirations and why they would want to join your programme.

INTERVENTION G

Use gender-responsive communication in your outreach materials.

Unrelated to whom you are targeting with your outreach and what your format might be, you must be aware of how language can either enforce or subvert gender inequalities. Within our communication materials we need to challenge ourselves to eliminate gender norms and stereotypes associated with both women and men. For example, within all communication pieces, use the singular 'they' instead of masculine pronouns to express neutrality and use gender-neutral terms like humankind, instead of mankind.



Resource

Look at the [Ten Principles of Gender Responsive Communication for Development](#) by UNDP (2018) to see more of these tips on how to eliminate gender norms.

INTERVENTION H

Review your selection process.

Together with your team, reflect on the selection process that you are going through. What do you ask as follow-up questions? What is the setting and moment in which you ask these questions? Make sure that you check your selection criteria on things that are possibly deterring women from applying to your programme. These could include time, location, competitive elements, the importance given to pitching, etc. In general, it is known that women only apply once they are more certain that they meet the required qualifications compared with men. So if we intend to include more women, for example, we need to make them even more comfortable. (HBR, 2014)



Resource

Check out the article by [HBR \(2020\)](#) for more information on how pitching biases

EXAMPLE

An accelerator programme in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the Climate Innovation Center set up a programme (G5) that supports women to be more innovative and better equipped to participate in the innovation challenges. The programme was set-up in the second year of ClimateLaunchpad because interest from women entrepreneurs were very low. The Climate Innovation Center conducted interviews with 40 women from Abuja and Lagos to find out why they did not progress with their incubation programmes. Based on the findings, the following year, they adapted their approach and had more quality applications from women-led organisations.



ACTION PLAN

Look back at your self-assessment. For all of the questions that you have answered with a “No”, try to ideate how you could turn them into a “Yes”. Write your ideas down below.

Now that you have an idea about all of the things you can do, reflect back on your mission and vision statement, and define what the **impact** is that you want to achieve within this step. What specific impact do you aim to create and to whom do you want to deliver it? Try to be as specific and measurable as possible.

Now that you know what impact you aim for, define your **outcomes**. List the most important things that need to happen to realise the impact, but that you might not be fully able to control as an organisation.

Finally, reflect on your ideation and highlight the **activities (outcomes)** that will help you to achieve your impact. 



Step 3 Gender Smart Selection, Training and Investing

Every entrepreneur prefers to receive support in their own way. When setting up your support strategy, make sure the support that your team offers fits to the needs of the entrepreneurs, so that they can get their innovations for climate action to the highest level to thrive in your programme and beyond.

STEP 3

Supporting climate entrepreneurs in a gender-smart way



THE CASE

The support provided to entrepreneurs is seen as one of the most crucial parts in an accelerator programme. This includes the actual content that is shared with entrepreneurs and the way in which your team engages and works together with them. When the entrepreneurs who have applied to your programme have various needs and prefer diverse ways of coaching, we need to ensure good quality of support to help these entrepreneurs succeed. The way in which you support your entrepreneurs strongly determines the quality of their innovations and how they are able to present those ideas throughout the programme. This leads to more successful entrepreneurs, and with that a more successful acceleration programme.



SELF-ASSESSMENT

Yes No

During your programme design, have you specifically taken into account the needs of your persona?

The programme set-up does not prevent minorities from participating within the various activities. Especially for your persona ensure that they face any challenges to participate. Think of differences in availability, personal preferences and needs, travel time, personal safety, etc.

Do your coaches have the skills to recognise gender bias as it happens, and act on it?

Gender bias can be present throughout all activities of this acceleration programme. By ensuring your staff know how to recognise, address and act on these biases, entrepreneurs will feel more supported and are more likely to act on gender bias themselves.

Do you offer both soft-skill and hard-skill training and support to the entrepreneurs in your programme?

Hard skills are related to specific technical knowledge and training while soft skills are personality traits such as leadership, communication or time management. Both types of skills are necessary for these entrepreneurs to achieve success.

Do you provide the entrepreneurs with training on gender bias, how it affects their business and how they can deal with it?

Gender bias influences the entrepreneurs and their business. Training entrepreneurs on recognising gender bias and its influence on their business will help to create greater understanding of the challenges women entrepreneurs face. It might trigger entrepreneurs to address challenges they see being faced by themselves and others around them.

Do you provide entrepreneurs with training or support on how to become a gender-inclusive business?

Seeing the engagement with entrepreneurs only as a learning process for them, would be a waste. Through working with entrepreneurs, we can ensure that they themselves will start to practice what we preach, and that they are not only aware of their own situation but also of all others surrounding them. Once they start seeing that, the inclusivity within their own organisation will most likely thrive.

Do you examine the existing gaps of entrepreneurs and match them to coaches based on their profile (knowledge, experience, soft skills)?

The social and cultural environment affects men and women entrepreneurs differently. Women often face greater pressures in the form of unpaid care work and gender stereotypes from society. This influences the way in which they would be most suitably coached to success. To ensure that you retain women-led businesses in your programme, the match between the coach and entrepreneur is crucial. Additionally, technical knowledge or certain soft skills could be a determining factor in pairing coaches and entrepreneurs together.

Do you foster entrepreneurs to share learnings with each other?

Aside from learning from a coach or trainer, one of the beneficial aspects of an accelerator programme is the connectivity between entrepreneurs. Women often have a smaller support system and network, and they have fewer representative people in leadership positions. Fostering entrepreneurs to share their experiences, can provide that support network for women, and could provide a long term helping hand even beyond your programme.

Do you support the entrepreneurs beyond the completion of your programme?

It is likely that your programme will not be able to offer expertise on all of the different issues that an entrepreneur faces. That is why it is good to introduce women to other people or organisations that might complement your activities.



POTENTIAL INTERVENTIONS

Review these potential interventions to improve the outcome of your self-assessment.

INTERVENTION I

Restructuring your programme set-up.

People vary in their personalities, leadership qualities, availability, and in personal preferences. For example, their availability for a training can depend on various aspects like childcare, travel time and personal safety. It is impossible to facilitate a programme that fits all participants perfectly. But when you have a focus on including one (or multiple) persona(s) more within your programme, you need to ensure that the way in which you have planned these activities agree well to this persona, and does not bias their participation.

For example, for a mother of two young children who is an entrepreneur in your programme, it might be complex to participate in a workshop for two full days. If you want to engage this woman, think of how you can organise the programme in such a way that it would be possible for her to join. For example, could you provide childcare during the event or could you split the content in multiple shorter sessions over various days?



Resource

Make sure that you look back at your persona, and gather more information about it if needed.

INTERVENTION J

Facilitate gender awareness sessions for your team and the entrepreneurs.

In order for your team to support both women and men entrepreneurs adequately, they will need to be equipped with a diverse skill set and education. For women entrepreneurs to feel more comfortable and confident within the programme, it is important that gender biases are noticed and addressed by either the coach or the entrepreneur. These sessions include recognising a gender bias and how to assertively communicate about it. This is beneficial for both your women entrepreneurs and your women coaches, since your coaches are also highly likely to face gender bias in daily life.

Additionally, coaches could support entrepreneurs on:

How to take the specific needs of all genders into account when designing their climate innovation.

How to apply gender-responsive marketing when promoting climate solutions.



Resource

See the slides of this [Gender Awareness Session for Coaches](#) that was used within the ClimateLaunchpad programme of EIT Climate-KIC. You can use this as inspiration for your own workshop.

INTERVENTION K

Matching coaches with entrepreneurs.

In previous parts of this handbook, we have worked on bringing diversity into our coaching pool, project team and our entrepreneurs. It is now important to pair those coaches with the right entrepreneurs to achieve the greatest successes. For this purpose, start by reflecting on their type of innovation and their main need for support to achieving success. For example, an entrepreneur might have applied with a very technical idea but has not yet thought through every detail of the innovation. This entrepreneur will most likely need a coach who understands the technical aspects of the innovation, and is able to provide support on improvement of this technical innovation. Conduct the gender-smart needs assessment to help you match the coaches with entrepreneurs.

INTERVENTION L

Gender-smart needs assessment.

Conduct a gender-smart needs assessment at the start of the support rounds, so you can better understand how you can support each individual entrepreneur. The assessment is to be completed by the entrepreneurs, and it is often completed in combination with a follow-up interview to dive deeper into their needs. An example of such an assessment can be found within the WeRise Toolkit for Accelerators, in which the main topics assessed are decision-making power, support structures, self-efficacy and personal environment. You can use the learnings from the assessment to pair your coaches to the entrepreneurs, define topics to provide support on and match various entrepreneurs together in a group session with similar challenges. You will be able to determine the entrepreneurs' individual needs, as well as identify common needs and interests among the entire group.



Resource

Check the "Conduct the Gender-Smart Assessment" section in the [WeRise toolkit for Accelerators](#) (page 41).

INTERVENTION M

Peer-to-peer learning and continuous networking.

Innovations for climate action start-ups and starting entrepreneurs face many similar challenges. By bringing entrepreneurs together and facilitating sharing among a group of entrepreneurs, you can help to sustain a support group for all of them. Especially among women entrepreneurs there is often a lack of support in their own network while this support of like-minded people is sometimes also missing for new entrepreneurs in climate innovation. After you have started such a support group, accelerators can fade out their contribution/facilitation, and companies can continue to find each other beyond the completion of the programme.

EXAMPLE

An accelerator programme in South Africa

One of the ClimateLaunchpad partners supported the entrepreneurs from the bootcamps beyond the completion of the programme. They offered matchmaking support to the entrepreneurs, which means that they accessed funding opportunities that can take the entrepreneurs' ideas from the ideation stage to pilot. The organisation arranged opportunities for the entrepreneurs to pitch to interested funders that could further support their needs. In addition, through their other programmes they offered continuous capacity-building support to these ClimateLaunchpad participants.



ACTION PLAN

Look back at your self-assessment. For all of the questions that you have answered with a “No”, try to ideate how you could turn them into a “Yes”. Write your ideas down below.

Now that you have an idea about all of the things you can do, reflect back on your mission and vision statement, and define what the **impact** is that you want to achieve within this step. What specific impact do you aim to create and to whom do you want to deliver it? Try to be as specific and measurable as possible.

Now that you know what impact you aim for, define your **outcomes**. List the most important things that need to happen to realise the impact, but that you might not be fully able to control as an organisation.

Finally, reflect on your ideation and highlight the **activities (outcomes)** that will help you to achieve your impact. 



Step 4 Internal reflection to eliminate bias.

Through pitching and competitions, innovations get selected for funding. When setting up a competition event or introducing entrepreneurs to potential funders, the accelerator plays a big role in the selection. Some activities bias participants with high quality and potential, it is key to eliminate these biases.

STEP 4

Selecting the most promising climate innovations in an inclusive manner



THE CASE

Within acceleration programmes, the accelerator is not always in control of the selection criteria for entrepreneur selection in a pitch competition. Indeed, there are more facets in place deciding which innovations are chosen, or not. For example every person's interpretation of the selection criteria is different and the preference of a jury member always plays a role in deciding which entrepreneur is chosen for a following round. It is important to eliminate the various biases and ensure that the most promising innovations are selected and eventually chosen to for funding.



SELF-ASSESSMENT

Yes No

Do you have an activity for presenting the innovation that eliminates biases?

Due to differences in men's and women's leadership qualities, women are more often biased against in pitching competitions. Have you set up your pitching procedure in a different way that men's and women's qualities are equally valued, and your persona is not biased in the procedure?

Does your jury comprise of an equal balance between men and women?

Considering an equal gender-balanced jury ensures that you are able to select a balanced type of innovations among the ideas that have been put forward, without unconsciously biasing them.

Do you have different jury members each year to assess the various climate innovations presented by the entrepreneurs?

Ensuring that you have a different jury each year avoids bias and supports the creation of new climate-smart innovations.

When selecting the jury, do you consider the life experiences, expectations and needs of both men and women?

For example, childcare and flexible working hours can help jury members to be available during your competition.

Do you select jury members based on diverse interests, expertise and background?

The affinity bias is the tendency of people to connect with others who share similar interests, experiences and backgrounds. By ensuring a diverse jury, all innovations can be reviewed more equally. Your jury needs to have a wide understanding of all of the different innovation types in the program, to ensure that all ideas/innovations are understood clearly and rated in an unbiased way.

Have you defined alternative selection criteria should two innovations receive similar scores?

There might be a preference to continue with a man or woman entrepreneur, based on your chosen persona.

Have the jury members been trained on gender bias in pitching and how it may affect their decision-making?

Various biases influence the decisions made by the jury members. Creating awareness among these jury members on the existence of these biases helps them to adapt their own behaviour.



POTENTIAL INTERVENTIONS

Review these potential interventions to improve the outcome of your self-assessment.

INTERVENTION M

Define your jury selection criteria.

Before you reach out to any potential jury members, plan ahead and first define what you want from your jury. Create a list of criteria and rank them according to their importance. In this way, you can start reaching out to jury members and check if the available jury members are according to your preference.

Ultimately, you want to have a perfectly diverse team, but that is generally not realistic. Therefore, you need to decide what you find most important, such as, gender, technical/social background, experience, etc. Reflect back on your persona: are there aspects of your persona(s) that you would want the jury to have?

INTERVENTION N

Define your equal rating procedure.

In preparation of your pitching event, it is important to prepare for what will happen if you have entrepreneurs rated equally and you need to decide on who continues. If you skip this step, then you leave it up to the jury members to decide on this on the spot, based on their affinity. If you have estimated a certain ratio of innovation types or men/women to participate, then you can use this as the deciding factor. However, this can only be done equally if you have set the ratio prior to the competition.

Looking back at your persona again, what is the most important factor of this persona for you? If it is the innovation type, business stage or entrepreneur, then define that as the deciding factor. In this way, the organisation has the control over the selection process.

INTERVENTION O

Prepare your jury members.

Preparing your jury for the event is often overlooked and its value is underestimated, although this preparation strongly defines how much the jury will act accordingly to your preferred selection procedure. The more that a jury team is prepared and aware of the procedure, the less they will act based solely on their own affinity. Ensure that you have arranged time with the jury members together to train them prior to the event. Here, you can walk them through the entire procedure, and answer any questions. Additionally, a practice round can provide the opportunity to review if the jury members complete the evaluation as you would like. This could be achieved by viewing a video of an innovation pitch from a previous round and letting them evaluate that pitch. Use this moment to also explain the equal rating procedure.

INTERVENTION P

Train jury members on gender bias in pitching.

Various research shows that gender bias is present in pitching competitions. Affinity bias as explained before is only one of these biases. Kanze et al. (2018) found that investors adopted a different approach for men and women entrepreneurs. Men entrepreneurs were viewed with a promotion orientation when being quizzed, which means they focus on hopes, achievements, advancements, and ideals. On the other hand, women entrepreneurs were viewed with a prevention orientation, which means they were questioned about safety, responsibility, security and vigilance.



Resource

Watch the TED Talk (2019) by Dana Kanze on [The Real Reason Female Entrepreneurs Get Less Funding](#) for the full story. Use the slides of this [Gender Awareness Session for Coaches](#) as a starting point. You can use this as inspiration for your own workshop.



ACTION PLAN

Look back at your self-assessment. For all of the questions that you have answered with a “No”, try to ideate how you could turn them into a “Yes”. Write your ideas down below.

Now that you have an idea about all of the things you can do, reflect back on your mission and vision statement, and define what the **impact** is that you want to achieve within this step. What specific impact do you aim to create and to whom do you want to deliver it? Try to be as specific and measurable as possible.

Now that you know what impact you aim for, define your **outcomes**. List the most important things that need to happen to realise the impact, but that you might not be fully able to control as an organisation.

Finally, reflect on your ideation and highlight the **activities (outcomes)** that will help you to achieve your impact. 

A background image showing three women in a meeting, overlaid with a blue filter. The woman on the left is looking towards the center, the woman in the middle is looking down, and the woman on the right is looking towards the center. They are sitting around a table with papers and a smartphone.

III. Work plan

WORK PLAN

Turn your learnings into tangible change

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In the work plan below, you will summarise the conclusions from the four steps, and choose which interventions you will commit to within your acceleration programme. For each of the four steps, fill in your chosen objective for change and which interventions you will commit to. Then, go to page 40 to learn more about gender-climate impact assessment and define your own measurement approach for each step.

	Your impact goal What is the impact that you want to achieve?	Programme limitations What are relevant programme limitations influencing the interventions that you will select?	Selected interventions Which interventions do you choose to commit to?
Step 1: Building and growing your team towards diversity	<i>Example: By 2023, we want to have a diverse implementation team, that exists for at least 40% of women.</i>	<i>Example: About 80% of our current team are men, and we are content with the qualify or work they deliver.</i>	<i>Example: We choose intervention D, to work on eliminating gender bias from our recruitment procedure, to ensure an unbiased process.</i>
Step 2: Promoting to the right entrepreneurs			
Step 3: Supporting climate entrepreneurs in a gender-smart way			
Step 4: Selecting the most promising climate innovations in an inclusive manner			

Workplan

GENDER-CLIMATE IMPACT MEASUREMENT

Here we will guide you through a simple way to detail your impact measurement plan. This will help you to monitor the impact of the chosen gender-climate interventions on your programme over time.

Impact should be measured to estimate the various effects of your interventions that are implemented for specific items in terms of gender equality or climate impact. These effects can be positive, negative or neutral.

How to do this?

In previous steps, you have completed the preparation work for defining an impact measurement plan. While looking back at your impact goal and selected interventions for each step, complete the table below.

Examples of indicators

- Number or percentage of women/men/mixed-led businesses that participated in various stages of your programme.
- Number or percentage of innovations from different climate sectors.
- Number or percentage of women/men within your own organisation.
- Number or percentage of businesses that target women/men/children as consumers.
- Number or percentage of employees/coaches/entrepreneurs trained on gender bias.
- Level of confidence that women entrepreneurs have before and after participating in your programme.

	Define the indicators What specific things could you measure to follow up on the impact of your activity? Look at the list of example indicators for inspiration.	Measurement plan Define how your team is best equipped to measure this impact. Who will need to collect the data and how will they do it?	Timing of monitoring When will you measure this impact and how frequently? Will you collect the data on a yearly basis at the beginning and at end of the program, or do you want to monitor the programme more frequently?
Step 1: Building and growing your team towards diversity	Example: % of women within the implementation team	Example: Our HR manager will be responsible for calculating and sharing this data	Example: The data will be continuously monitored and once a year we will evaluate the data in January before the new project round starts.
Step 2: Promoting to the right entrepreneurs			
Step 3: Supporting climate entrepreneurs in a gender-smart way			
Step 4: Selecting the most promising climate innovations in an inclusive manner			

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